

Appl. No. 10/826,293
Amdt. dated 9 OCT 2005
Reply to Office action of 9 SEPT 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-13. (canceled)

14. (original): A method for using a knock-down crate to transport produce from a loading location to an unloading location, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a knock-down crate having:

- (i) a base with an upper surface including an elongated recess, and
- (ii) four sides deployable in a crate configuration wherein a plurality of said ~~four~~-sides are engaged with said base and each other to form a four-sided crate, said four sides being further deployable in a knock-down configuration wherein said four sides are received substantially within said elongated recess;

(b) deploying said crate in said crate configuration;

(c) loading said crate at the loading location with produce, at least part of the produce lying within said elongated recess;

(d) transporting the produce in said crate to the unloading location;

(e) unloading the produce from said crate; and

(f) deploying said crate in said knock-down configuration with said plurality of the four-sides located substantially within said elongated recess for transport to a next loading location.

Appl. No. 10/826,293
Amdt. dated 9 OCT 2005
Reply to Office action of 9 SEPT 2005

15. (original): The method of claim 14, wherein upper and lower edges of said sides and upper and lower peripheral regions of said base are formed with complementary alignment projections and recesses, the method further comprising:

(a) stacking said crate when in said crate configuration with other similar crates such that said alignment projections and recesses on said upper edges of said sides and on said lower peripheral region of said base serve to align said crate with the other similar crates placed above and below said crate; and

(b) stacking said crate when in said knock-down configuration with other similar crates such that said alignment projections and recesses on said upper and lower peripheral regions of said base serve to align said crate with the other similar crates placed above and below said crate.

16. (new): The method of claim 14, wherein said length is implemented so as to be substantially equal to said breadth.

17. (new): The method of claim 16, wherein said first pair of sides and said second pair of sides are implemented so as to be interchangeable.

18. (new): The method of claim 14, wherein said base and said first and second pairs of sides are all formed primarily from molded plastic material.

19. (new): The method of claim 14, wherein said base is implemented with a pair of elongated channels extending parallel to said length for receiving tines of a forklift mechanism.

20. (new): The method of claim 14, wherein said recess is implemented such that a major part of said recess lies between said elongated channels.

21. (new): The method of claim 014, wherein said elongated recess is implemented as an open-ended recess extending the entirety of said length.

Appl. No. 10/826,293
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22. (new): The method of claim 21, wherein at least said second pair of sides are each implemented with a downwardly projecting tab configured to substantially close an end of said open-ended recess when said side is engaged with said base.

23. (new): The method of claim 22, said first pair of sides and said second pair of sides are implemented so as to be interchangeable, said base including a pair of slots extending parallel to said length and configured for receiving said downwardly projecting tab of said first pair of sides.

24. (new): The method of claim 14, wherein said elongated recess is implemented as a closed-ended recess terminating at two end walls.

25. (new): The method of claim 24, wherein each side of said first and second pair of sides is implemented with a length no greater than a length of said closed-ended recess.

26. (new): The method of claim 14, wherein each side of said first and second pairs of sides is implemented with attachment features for attachment to two adjacent sides, and wherein said attachment features are further configured such that each pair of said sides are doubly-interlockable to form a unit with said pair of sides associated in close parallel relation.